

Message Text

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65

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02

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R 271111Z JUN 75

FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3838

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

USIA WASHDC

USMISSION GENEVA

USMISSION USUN

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GENEVA FOR MEPC DEL

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SUBJ: PRESIDENT ASAD ON RELATIONS WITH UNITED STATES AND
CURRENT MIDDLE EAST SITUATION

1. PRESIDENT ASAD'S JUNE 22 INTERVIEW WITH SALIM AL-LOWZI,
EDITOR OF BEIRUT WEEKLY AL-HAWADITH, WAS PUBLISHED IN FULL
IN DAMASCUS PRESS JUNE 27. ASAD'S STATEMENTS ON RELATIONS WITH
U.S. AND ON CURRENT MIDDLE EAST SITUATION ARE OF SPECIAL
INTEREST AND ARE QUOTED IN FULL BELOW.

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2. ASAD: ...THE OCTOBER WAR FREED US FROM MANY COMPLEXES.

3. LAWZI: THIS IS TRUE. EVERYONE HAS OBSERVED THAT SYRIA HAS LIBERATED ITSELF FROM COMPLEXES WHICH USED TO GOVERN ITS INTERNAL AND DOMESTIC CONDITIONS -- FOR EXAMPLE, RELATIONS WITH AMERICA.

4. ASAD: INDEED THERE WERE COMPLEXES. WHY SHOULD I BOYCOTT AMERICA WHEN I AM CAPABLE OF REJECTING ANYTHING WHICH IS NOT IN ACCORDANCE WITH OUR INTERESTS? OUR RELATIONS WITH THE SOVIET UNION ARE GOOD, AND WE WANT OUR RELATIONS WITH THE U.S. TO BE GOOD ALSO.

5. LOWZI: HOW FAR HAVE YOUR RELATIONS WITH AMERICA GONE?

6. ASAD: WE CAN SAY ABOUT THAT THAT THEY HAVE BEEN CONTINUING SINCE THE OCTOBER WAR, OR, MORE PRECISELY, SINCE AFTER THE OCTOBER WAR, AND THAT THEY ARE NORMAL RELATIONS. AS I TOLD YOU, WE WANT THEM TO DEVELOP, BUT THE INFLUENCE OF THE ZIONIST MOVEMENT WITHIN THE U.S. IS AN OBSTACLE TO THIS DEVELOPMENT. I SEE A CONFLICT BETWEEN THE INTERESTS OF THE U.S. AND INTERESTS OF THE ZIONIST MOVEMENT. THE FUTURE OF ARAB RELATIONS WITH AMERICA DEPENDS UPON HOW THIS CONFLICT IS RESOLVED. IF AMERICA'S INTERESTS PREVAIL, OUR RELATIONS WITH AMERICA WILL DEVELOP AND IMPROVE. THE OPPOSITE IS ALSO TRUE.

7. LOWZI: I HAVE HEARD THAT THE RESPONSE OF MR. ABD AL-HALIM KHADDAM TO A PARTIAL WITHDRAWAL FROM THE GOLAN HEIGHTS, WHICH WAS OFFERED TO HIM DURING HIS CONVERSATION WITH FORD AND KISSINGER, WAS THAT SUCH AN OFFER HAD BEEN PRESENTED TO SYRIA BEFORE AND THERE IS NOTHING NEW IN IT WHICH WOULD CALL FOR A CHANGE IN THE POSITION OF DAMASCUS.

8. ASAD: I DO NOT KNOW THE FULL RESULTS OF MR. KHADDAM'S DISCUSSIONS BECUASE HE HAS NOT YET RETURNED FROM WASHINGTON. HE MAY RETURN TOMORROW OR THE DAY AFTER (ASAD WAS SPEAKING JUNE 22). HIS VISIT TO AMERICA WAS BASED ON AN AMERICAN INITIATIVE TO KNOW MORE OF THE DETAILS OF OUR POSITION REGARDING THE SITUATION IN THE AREA AND THE SEARCH FOR

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JUST SOLUTIONS WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE AMERICAN POLITICAL REASSESSMENT. IN HIS TALKS WITH FORD AND KISSINGER, MR. KHADDAM WILL MAKE CLEAR THE SYRIAN POSITION, WHICH HAS BEEN EXPOSED BEFORE IN OUR PREVIOUS CONTACTS AND MEETINGS. IT IS FULL WITHDRAWAL FROM THE TERRITORIES WHICH WERE OCCUPIED IN 1967, AND SYRIA WILL NOT CONCEDE A SINGLE HAND-SPAN OF TERRITORY, AND ASSURED RESTORATION OF THE RIGHTS OF THE PALESTINIAN ARAB PEOPLE.

9. LOWZI: IS GRADUAL WITHDRAWAL ACCEPTABLE?

10. ASAD: WHAT IS THE MEANING OF GRADUAL WITHDRAWAL?

11. LOWZI: PIECE-BY-PIECE.

12. ASAD: IF IT IS IN THE FRAMEWORK OF AN OVERALL CONCEPTION OR PLAN BASED ON WITHDRAWAL FROM ALL THE TERRITORIES AND GUARANTEEING THE RIGHTS OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE, IT IS ACCEPTABLE -- ON CONDITION THAT THE PARTIAL WITHDRAWALS NOT CONFLICT WITH THE FUNDAMENTAL AND NECESSARY EFFORTS TO FIND A COMPLETE SOLUTION.

13. LOWZI: COULD YOU SPELL OUT FOR US THE STRATEGY FOR PEACE AS YOU SEE IT?

14. ASAD: IT IS WHAT WE ARE NOW DOING. BUILDING (DEVELOPING) OURSELVES NATIONALLY AND AS ARABS AND AT THE SAME TIME USING ALL MEANS IN THE WORLD TO REALIZE A JUST PEACE ON A BASIS WHICH WILL LEAD TO COMPLETE WITHDRAWAL AND RESTORATION OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLES' RIGHTS.

15. LOWZI: IS THIS A LONG-TERM OR SHORT-TERM STRATEGY?

16. ASAD: THAT IS NOT IMPORTANT. THE IMPORTANT THING IS THE CONTINUATION OF THE PROCESS OF BUILDING WHICH WILL IN TURN AFFECT OUR ABILITY TO REALIZE THE JUST PEACE. IT IS ALSO IMPORTANT THAT NO STAGE CLOSE THE DOORS TO THE FOLLOWING STAGE. IT GOES WITHOUT SAYING THAT WE WILL NOT TAKE ANY MEASURE WHICH WOULD REFLECT NEGATIVELY ON FUTURE GENERATIONS.

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17. LOWZI: BUT WHAT IF AMERICA'S EFFORTS FAIL?

18. ASAD: MY WORDS SHOULD NOT BE INTERPRETED TO MEAN THAT THE AMERICAN EFFORTS ARE FUNDAMENTAL. THE BASIC THING IS BUILDING OURSELVES NATIONALLY AND AS ARABS AND I MEAN BY "AS ARABS" MOBILIZING THE ENERGIES OF THE ARAB NATION AND ITS SOLIDARITY AND ITS UNITY. (ARAB) UNITY MUST BE PURSUED AT EVERY OPPORTUNITY.

19. REST OF INTERVIEW ON RELATIONS WITH IRAQ, JORDAN, LIBYA, LEBANON AND THE PLO WILL BE REPORTED SEPARATELY.
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